



Dear Reporter:

Thank you for downloading the Department of Fish and Game Marine Region's media kit.

This kit provides reporters with key information to get them started on developing in-depth stories about the Marine Region's activities. We will update the kits as needed, so check back often for updated materials.

The Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) and Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative information will provide reporters with quick facts and key time lines for reporters to use to generate stories. The Milestones page will be useful for reporters to gain in-depth information on recent activities under the MLMA, such as the Nearshore and Market Squid Fishery Management Plans, the Master Plan, and Status of the Fisheries Report.

The Story Ideas component is organized by subject from A to Z, allowing reporters to easily peruse the information. This document highlights key programs underway for marine resources and also serves to underscore the Marine Region's mission through its numerous programs geared toward achieving sustainable resources as outlined under the MLMA and MLPA.

The Frequently Asked Questions pages for the MLMA and MLPA will provide reporters with an easy source to learn more about the two acts.

Lastly, we plan for this on-line media kit to eventually include several visual components for reporters to utilize as part of in-depth stories, including numerous marine fish photos, maps, and fish identification pages. Currently, visual components may be obtained by contacting Carrie Wilson at (831) 649-7191, or e-mail cwilson@dfg.ca.gov.

Your comments and feedback are always welcome. I look forward to your response.

Thank you,

Carrie Wilson
Marine Region Communications Coordinator



The Marine Life Management Act of 1998

The act's overriding goal is to...

Ensure the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of California's living marine resources, including the conversion of healthy and diverse marine ecosystems.

The Marine Life Management Act (MLMA):

- Was passed by the California Legislature and signed into law in 1998.
- Effective Jan. 1, 1999.
- In 1999, state provided \$5.2 million to fund the program.
- Applies to all living marine resources along state's 1,100 miles of coast.
- Applies to all state managed marine fisheries (recreational and commercial).

MLMA calls for the Department of Fish and Game to take several actions, including:

- The transfer of management authority of several fisheries from the state Legislature to the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG).
- Development of a master plan that will guide development of management plans aimed at restoring declining fish populations as designed under the MLMA.
- Development of a plan for dealing with emerging fisheries as they become operational.
- Fish and Game Commission adoption of the DFG management plans for white seabass (adopted April 2002), and the nearshore fishery (adopted August 2002).

The MLMA Program For Managing Marine Fisheries:

- Requires evaluating the effectiveness of existing programs.
- Requires DFG to utilize the best scientific data available, and to engage the public in the process of developing management plans.
- Requires DFG to prepare the status of the fisheries report. Subsequently, reports will cover one-quarter of all marine and estuary fisheries managed by the state.

A Collaborative Effort:

- Department of Fish and Game
- California Sea Grant Extension Program
- UC/CSU
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Pacific Fishery Management Council
- Private scientific community
- Constituent Advisory Committees
- Public

DFG Marine Enforcement: *"Make A Difference"*

- Work with recreational anglers, commercial fishermen, and the general public.
- DFG patrols more than 250,000 square miles of ocean.
- State waters occur from coastline to up to three miles out to sea.
- 57 marine patrol enforcement positions; five new marine patrol boats.



MLMA MILESTONES

NEARSHORE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The state's most comprehensive management plan ever developed for ocean fishing.

Background

Nearshore fisheries have existed for decades. But a recent market for live fish used in the restaurant business and shipped overseas, started in Southern California in the 1980s and since then ricocheted to Northern and Central California. As of 2001, the landings of live finfish in California have increased from 20,000 pounds worth \$20,000 to 1.2 million pounds worth more than \$1.3 million. Because fishermen primarily target small, immature nearshore fishes, increasing numbers of fish are being harvested before most get a chance to reproduce. When the effects of this new commercial fishery are added to the already substantial recreational fishery, it becomes clear that nearshore fish populations have been placed under enormous fishing pressure. The Legislature under the Marine Life Management Act decided to take a comprehensive approach to managing the nearshore fishery.

The Plan

The Nearshore FMP will guide the state's management of recreational and commercial fisheries along the coast. The plan aims to conserve and protect the nearshore ecosystem and its marine stocks, including 13 species of rockfish, California sheephead, greenlings, cabezon, and scorpionfish. Because all rockfishes are covered under the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Groundfish Management Plan, DFG is coordinating with the PPMC and NOAA Fisheries to ensure conformity with federal regulations.

DFG staff met with interested individuals and organizations across the state to ensure broad participation in the development of the plan. In addition, a Nearshore Advisory Committee, composed of commercial fishermen, recreational anglers, divers and environmentalists, was also established to provide DFG and the Commission with management recommendations for the plan.

Facts

California's nearshore ecosystem is known as one of the most productive ocean areas in the world, encompassing 2,550 sq. miles and generating more than \$40 million in revenue. The DFG's ecosystem approach to managing the state's nearshore fishery relies heavily on good science and is the result of landmark legislation.

The Nearshore FMP is available online at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/nfmp/index.html.

WHITE SEABASS FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

White seabass are making a comeback from previous low population levels only a few decades ago.

The Marine Life Management Act calls for a White Seabass Fishery Management Plan, which was originally adopted by the Fish and Game Commission in March of 1996. A final draft of the plan was amended and brought into compliance with the Marine Life Management Act, and became law on April 4, 2002.

White seabass are large, highly prized fish of the croaker family that are sought by both recreational and commercial fishermen. They occur in waters primarily off the coast of Southern California. Historically, their range has been as far north as the San Francisco Bay area. White seabass are recovering in California's ocean waters from low population levels of the mid-to-late 1900s. The current recovery is occurring under management designed to provide for moderate harvests while protecting young white seabass and spawning adults through season, size, bag, and gear provisions.

To view the plan, log on to www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/wsfmp/index.html. A white seabass fact sheet is also available at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/factsheet.pdf.

THE MASTER PLAN: A GUIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS AS DIRECTED BY THE MARINE LIFE MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1998.

The Master Plan will serve as a roadmap for DFG's development of management plans for California's fisheries.

The Marine Life Management Act, which became law on Jan. 1, 1999, requires DFG to develop a master plan that specifies the process and resources needed to prepare, adopt, and implement fishery management plans (FMPs) for sport and commercial marine fisheries managed by the state. The master plan must also provide a prioritized list of fisheries for future FMPs, describe ongoing and additional DFG data collection activities conducted to acquire essential fishery information, provide a process for meaningful constituent involvement in the development of FMPs, and specify a review process for the master plan.

To download a copy, log on to www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/masterplan/index.html.

CALIFORNIA'S MARINE LIVING RESOURCES: A STATUS REPORT

The best information available for marine and estuarine fisheries managed by the state

The status of the fisheries report is a fourth edition in a series of reports that address the status of California's marine and anadromous fisheries, and other marine life. The first report was published in December, 2001. Under the MLMA, future annual reports should cover one-quarter of all marine and estuarine fisheries managed by the state. *California's Living Marine Resources* is available online at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/status/index.html.

MARKET SQUID FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

A management program for California's market squid resource that will ensure sustainability and reduce the potential for overfishing

The Market Squid Fishery Management Plan (MSFMP) was adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission on August 27, 2004.

The MSFMP establishes a management program for California's market squid resource, including new regulations and a restricted access program that will limit the number of vessels in the fishing fleet. The MSFMP also institutes ecosystem and habitat protections, which include closing areas to market squid fishing in the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and other areas.

The California market squid, popularly known in restaurants as "calamari," ranges from southeastern Alaska to Baja California, Mexico. In 2003, the fleet landed more than 90 million pounds (45,200 tons) of squid worth \$24.1 million. The squid resource is also an important source of bait for the state's recreational fisheries and is a valuable forage item for marine fish, birds and marine mammals.

For information on the MSFMP, check out DFG's website at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/marketsquid/index.html.



Marine Life Management Act FAQs

Question: What is the Marine Life Management Act?

Answer: In 1998, the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA), also known as AB1241, or the Keeley Bill after its author, was passed by the California Legislature and signed into law. In 1999, the state provided \$5.2 million in funding to begin full implementation of the new legislation. The MLMA opened a new era in the management and conservation of all living marine resources in California. The act's overriding goal is to ensure the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of California's living marine resources, including the conservation of healthy and diverse marine ecosystems.

Question: How will the MLMA be implemented?

Answer: The MLMA requires all of us to take new approaches to the formidable task of conserving the state's marine life and stewardship of healthy fisheries. To achieve this goal, new conservation measures and management plans for the state's fisheries will ensue. And fisheries managers will use the best available science and take stock of the effectiveness of programs. The MLMA also calls for involving "all interested parties" in making decisions regarding living marine resources.

Question: How will these management decisions be made and who will be involved?

Answer: The MLMA calls for informed citizen involvement by all Californians who benefit from the state's marine resources. DFG will foster key relationships with constituents, including consumptive and non-consumptive users, to help guide management decisions. Hopefully this process will garner constituent support for new management decisions and ultimately, ensure that marine resources remain intact. Stakeholders are key players in this new management system. Knowing and understanding the expectations of constituents is critical when determining the most appropriate long-term objectives for the state's fisheries. To better facilitate DFG's efforts to engage the public in developing fishery management plans, a public outreach team was composed to garner support.

Question: What is a "fishery management plan" ?

Answer: A fishery management plan (FMP) is a document that describes the nature and problems of a fishery and offers regulatory recommendations to manage that

fishery. In essence, it is a planning document that contains all the necessary information to make informed decisions on fishing opportunities that are geared toward maintaining sustainable marine resources. A fishery management plan is the vehicle used for a comprehensive approach to managing marine resources. Under the MLMA, fishery management plans will provide:

- Biological information about the marine resources under consideration
- Habitat needs and issues
- User groups and their fishing practices
- Conservation and management measures already in place
- The ecological role of the resource
- The environmental effects that might have to be considered
- The most appropriate management tools

These FMPs are based on the best scientific data and relevant information available. Fishery management plans are required to allocate any increases or decreases in allowable catches fairly between commercial and recreational users.

Question: What is the "Master Plan"?

Answer: The Master Plan is literally a "road map" to how California fisheries will be managed. Specifically, the Master Plan will include: a prioritized list of fisheries in need of fishery management plans; a process for how the public may be involved in developing fishery management and research plans; a description of the essential fishery information that will be needed to effectively manage the top priority fisheries; and a process of how these various plans will be amended or revised. The Master Plan is a first step in making clear and explicit, the complex process of fisheries management.

Question: How has the Marine Life Management Act changed the responsibilities of the California Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Game Commission?

Answer: Prior to the passage of the MLMA in 1998, the responsibility for managing most of California's marine resources harvested by commercial fisheries lay with the State Legislature. The Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Game Commission managed the recreational fisheries and those commercial fisheries which had catch quotas that changed periodically. Management of commercial fisheries under this division of responsibility was complicated, piecemeal, and oftentimes untimely. Necessary regulatory changes only occurred after much political deliberation and approval by both the Assembly and the Senate. In addition, this division of authority often resulted in laws and regulations that were inappropriate for the sustainability of the resource. The MLMA transfers permanent management authority to the Fish and

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Game Commission for the nearshore finfish fishery, the white seabass fishery, emerging fisheries, and other fisheries for which the Commission had some management authority prior to January 1, 1999.

Question: How is the public going to share in the responsibility of managing the living marine resources of California?

Answer: One of the changes the MLMA set into motion was to make the regulatory planning and decision-making process more open to the public. The Act instructs the Department and Commission to "involve all interested parties, including, but not limited to, individuals from the sport and commercial fishing industries, aquaculture industries, coastal and ocean tourism and recreation industries, marine conservation organizations, local governments, marine scientists and the public." To achieve this mandate several communication tools are being employed: The MLMA Evaluation Advisory Committee was created to advise the Department on implementation of all aspects of the MLMA. The Advisory Committee is composed of appointed representatives from the recreational and commercial fishing communities, the conservation and environmental community, and the scientific community. The Department and the Fish and Game Commission have made the regulatory process more accessible to their constituents by holding public meetings at several locations across the state and during hours more encouraging to public involvement. The Department and the Fish and Game Commission are using the Internet to inform more of the public about meetings and management activities in the marine environment. By making information more accessible and timely, the public may become better informed and enter into management discussions early in the processes.

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